



OJJDP – Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws Program

Addressing Underage Drinking Through Environmental Prevention Strategies

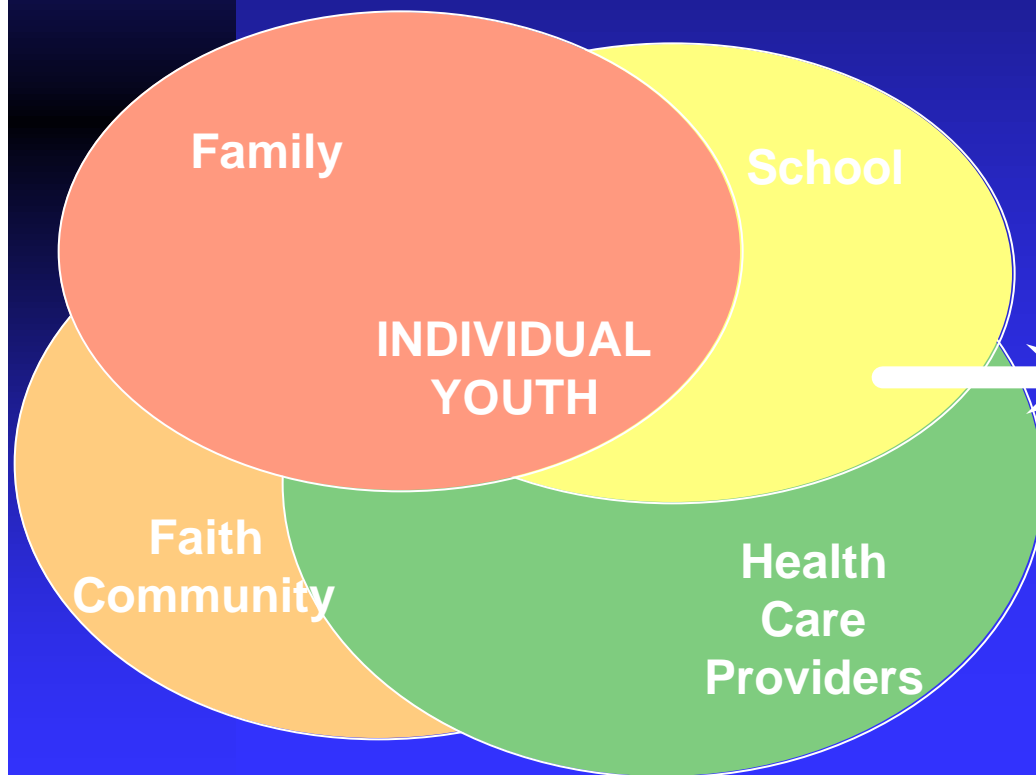
Maria G. Carmona
Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center
Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation

Prevention Strategies Attempt To Accomplish One of Two Things:

- **Change individual behavior by influencing choices about available options**
- **Change the environments in which individuals live so that the options available are different**

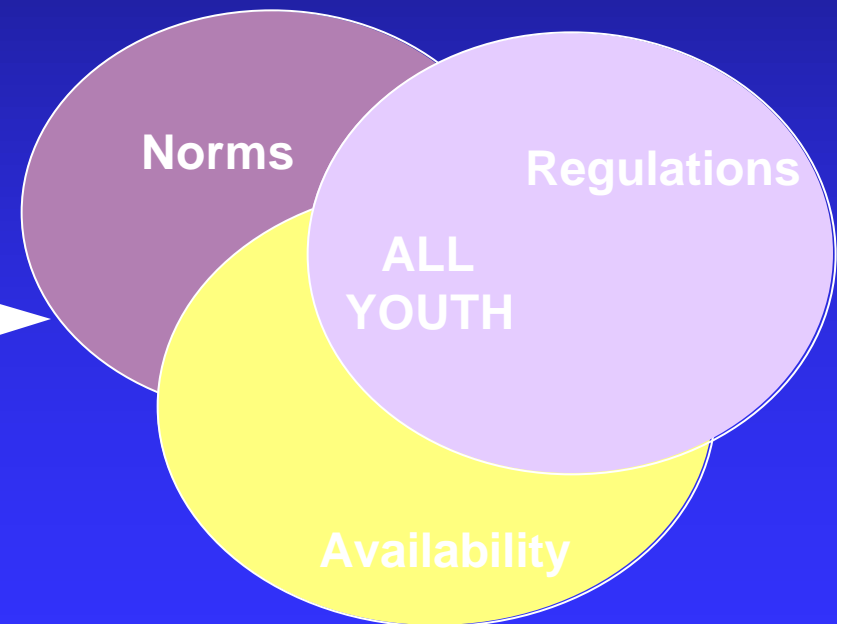
Strategies Targeting Individuals

*Socialize, Instruct, Guide,
Counsel*



Strategies Targeting Environments

Support, Thwart



Factors in the Shared Environment

- *Norms*
- *Availability*
- *Regulations*
 - ◆ *Enforcement*
 - ◆ *Sanctioning*

Norms

- **Basic orientations concerning the acceptability or unacceptability of alcohol use or manner of use for a specific group of individuals**

Availability

- **Accessibility or convenience of alcohol**
- **Dependent on the resources (time, energy, money) that must be expended to obtain alcohol.**

Regulations

- **Formalized laws, rules, policies that control availability and codify norms, and that specify sanctions for violations**

Where does enforcement fit in?

- Unless laws and policies are enforced regularly, their effects will be minimal if anything.
- Violations of laws and policies should be met with swift, certain, and appropriate penalties.

The Probability of Underage Drinking is Decreased to the Extent That...

- Community norms disapprove of underage drinking
- Alcohol is not easily available to youth
- Regulations that discourage underage drinking exist, and these regulations are enforced

Environmental Strategies

- Fast
- Efficient
- Powerful

Underage Drinking Problem Prevention

- Environmental strategies require that we
 - ◆ Identify the problem that needs to be addressed
 - ◆ Identify the environmental causes
 - ◆ CHANGE those causes

Underage Drinking Problems

- Prevalence of consumption
- Alcohol poisoning
- Impaired driving
- Poor school performance
- Interpersonal violence
- Suicide
- Risky sexual encounters
- Teen pregnancy
- Sexually-transmitted diseases
- Sexual assault
- Unintentional injury
- Alcohol dependence

Environmental Causes

■ Research guides us:

- ◆ Norms
- ◆ Availability
- ◆ Regulations
- ◆ Enforcement

Environmental Strategies to Change Causal Factors

- Research guides us...

Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility

- A report prepared by the Institute of Medicine and the National Research Council within the National Academies of Science at the request of the U.S. Congress
- Identifies 40 recommendations for action across 8 categories

Report Recommendations

- **Adult-oriented media campaign**
- **Partnership to prevent underage drinking**
- **Changes in entertainment media practices**

Report Recommendations

- Youth-oriented interventions
- Community Interventions
- Government assistance and coordination
- Research and evaluation

Report Recommendations

■ Limitations on access

- ◆ Enforcement of Minimum Purchase Age laws (compliance checks)
 - ◆ citations for violations
 - ◆ graduated fines and penalties
 - ◆ license suspension and revocation
- ◆ Federal requirement for states to achieve designated rates of retail compliance

Report Recommendations

■ Limitations on access

- ◆ Mandated training for all alcohol servers and sellers
- ◆ Enactment of dram shop liability laws
- ◆ Regulation of internet alcohol sales

Report Recommendations

■ Limitations on access

- ◆ Enforcement directed at adult third-party providers of alcohol
- ◆ Keg registration laws and ordinances
- ◆ Enforcement of zero tolerance laws

Report Recommendations

■ Limitations on access

- ◆ Enactment of graduated licensing laws
- ◆ Sobriety checkpoints
- ◆ Party patrol law enforcement operations
- ◆ Strengthen false i.d. prevention and detection efforts

Additional Strategies - Access

- **Controls on outlet density and location**
- **Controls on hours and days of sale**
- **Conditional use permits**
- **Raising prices**
- **Prohibit minors from entering bars**

Additional Strategies – Norms

- **Social Host liability**
- **Controls on alcohol advertising**
- **School policies**
- **Prohibition of alcohol sponsorship**
- **Prohibition of alcohol use in public places**

Environmental Prevention

- Often relies on the use of media advocacy
 - ◆ Strategic use of media to accomplish a public health goal:
 - ◆ Generate awareness of problem
 - ◆ Generate awareness of causes and solutions
 - ◆ Generate support for action to address causes with solutions

Example 1: Underage Drinking

Problem

Underage
Drinking

Causes

Easy access to
alcohol

Poor
enforcement of
laws

Community
tolerance

Low perception
of risk and
harm from use

Strategies

Merchant
education

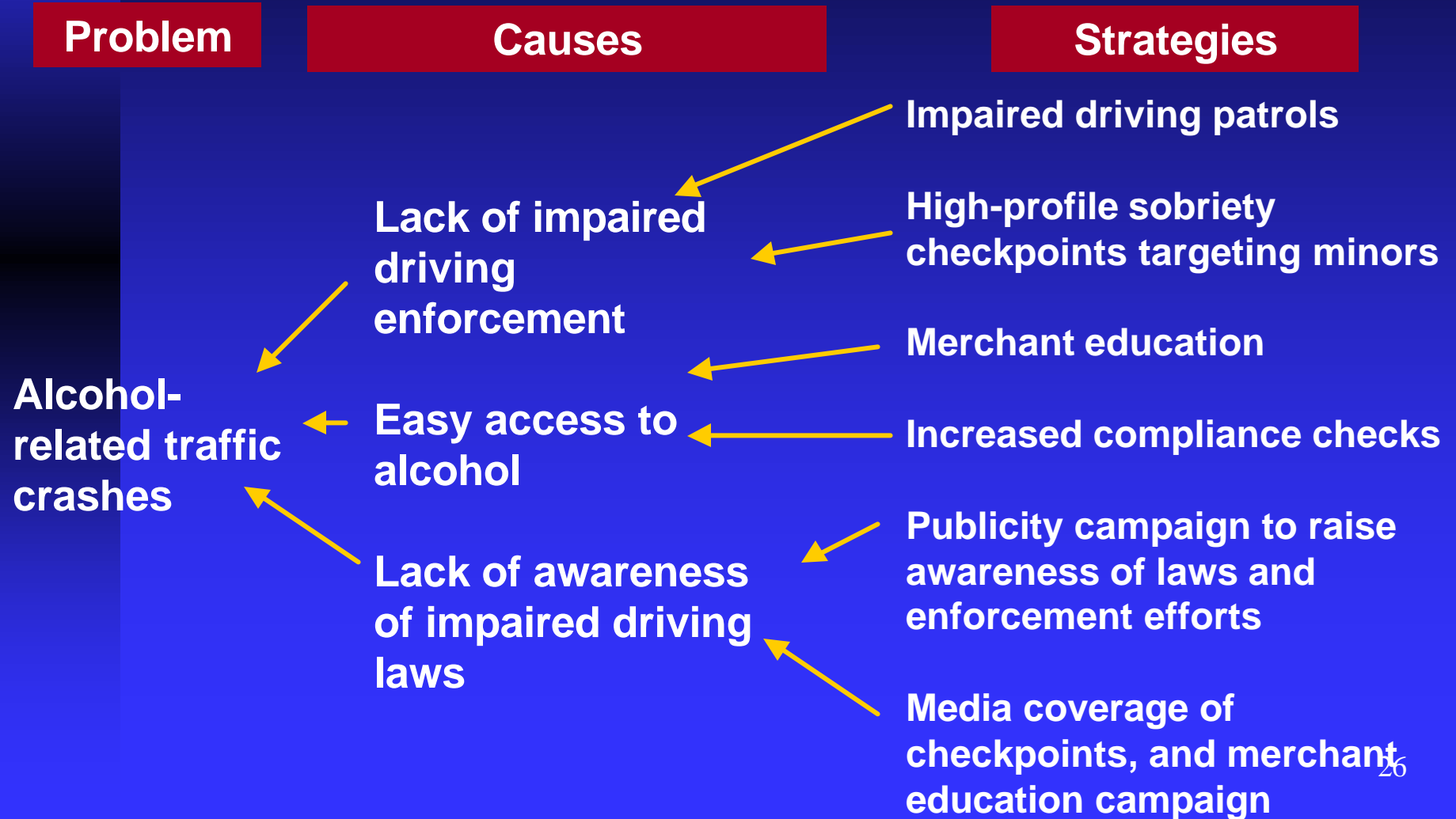
Compliance
checks

Party patrols

Public education
campaign
involving
extensive use of
media advocacy



Example 2: Impaired Driving



Example 3: Binge Drinking

Problem

Causes

Strategies

**Binge
Drinking**

High density of bars

Abundance of Happy
Hours

Failure to check IDs

Older adults providing
alcohol for parties
attended by underage
youth

Low perception of risk
and harm from binge
drinking

Lack of enforcement of
MPA law

New ordinance restricting outlet
density

Merchant education

Party Patrols

College policy of parental
notification of all alcohol-related
offenses

Compliance checks

Media coverage of compliance
check activity and results, keg
registration efforts, new college
policy, and ordinance efforts²⁷



Environmental strategies: What advocates need to know

■ Readiness

- ◆ Who, what , when, how & why of the problem
- ◆ Resource availability
- ◆ Existing laws and policies; loopholes
- ◆ Understanding roles and responsibilities

■ Adoption

- ◆ Model policies/laws or practices
- ◆ “How to” guides passing policies/increasing enforcement
- ◆ Examples of places that have had success

Environmental strategies: What advocates need to know

■ Passage/Increased Enforcement

- ◆ Organized campaign
- ◆ Gain public support
- ◆ Use of the media

■ Implementation

- ◆ Methods of implementation
- ◆ “How to” guides on implementation
- ◆ Examples of places that have had success

Environmental strategies - - What advocates need to know

■ Community mobilization

- ◆ The key to success of environmental strategies because they must be supported by a critical mass of community stakeholders in order to succeed.

A photograph of two children swinging on a swing set in a park. The child in the foreground is wearing a purple shirt and is captured in mid-swing, with their hair and clothing blurred due to motion. The child in the background is wearing a white shirt and is also swinging. The background consists of dense green foliage, also blurred, suggesting a fast shutter speed or motion blur effect. The overall scene conveys a sense of joy and movement.

**Never doubt that a small, committed
group of people with a good idea
can change the world. Indeed, it is
the only thing that ever has.**

- Margaret Meade

Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center
11710 Beltsville Drive, Suite 300
Calverton, MD 20705
1-877-335-1287
www.udetc.org